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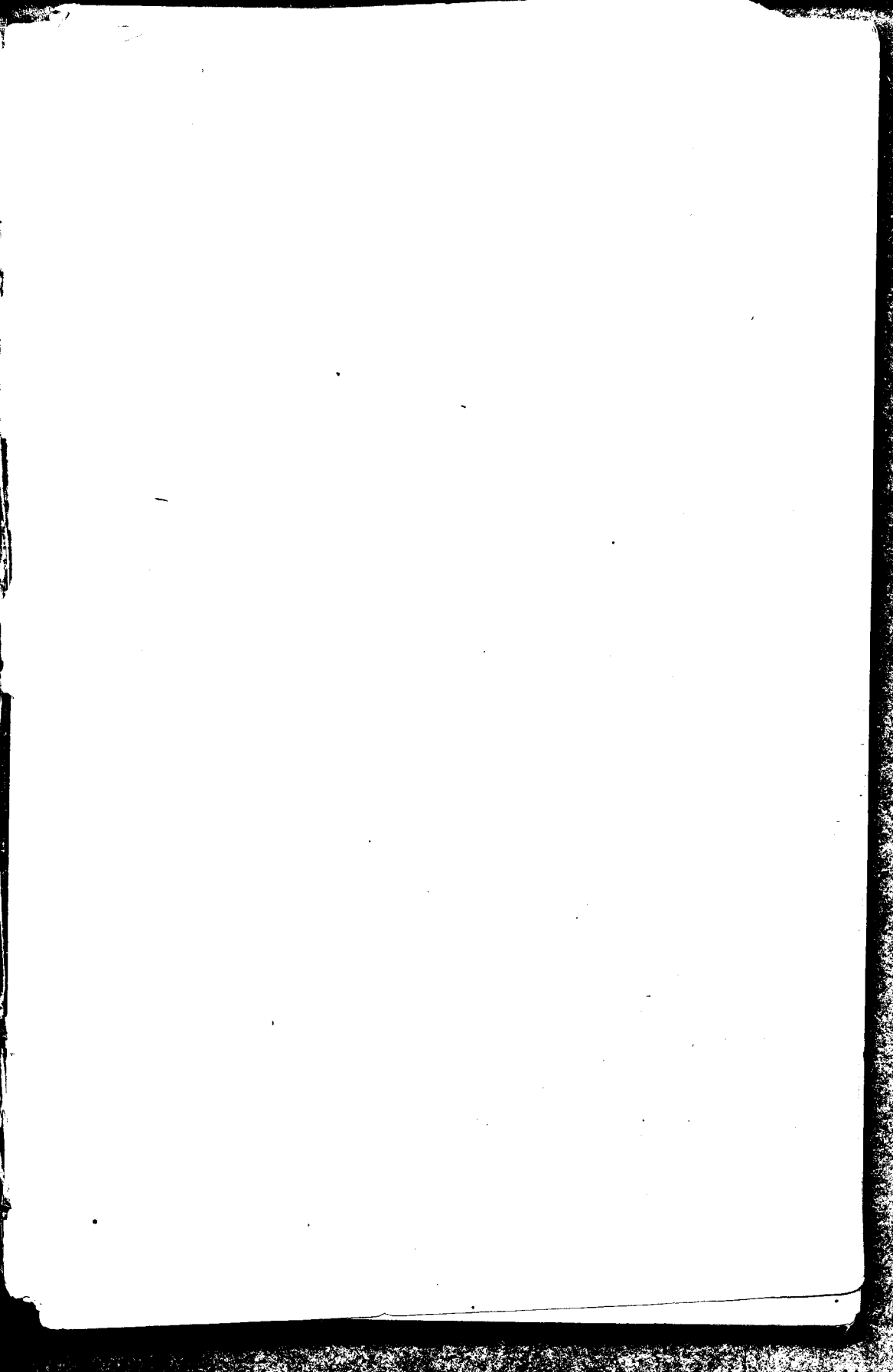
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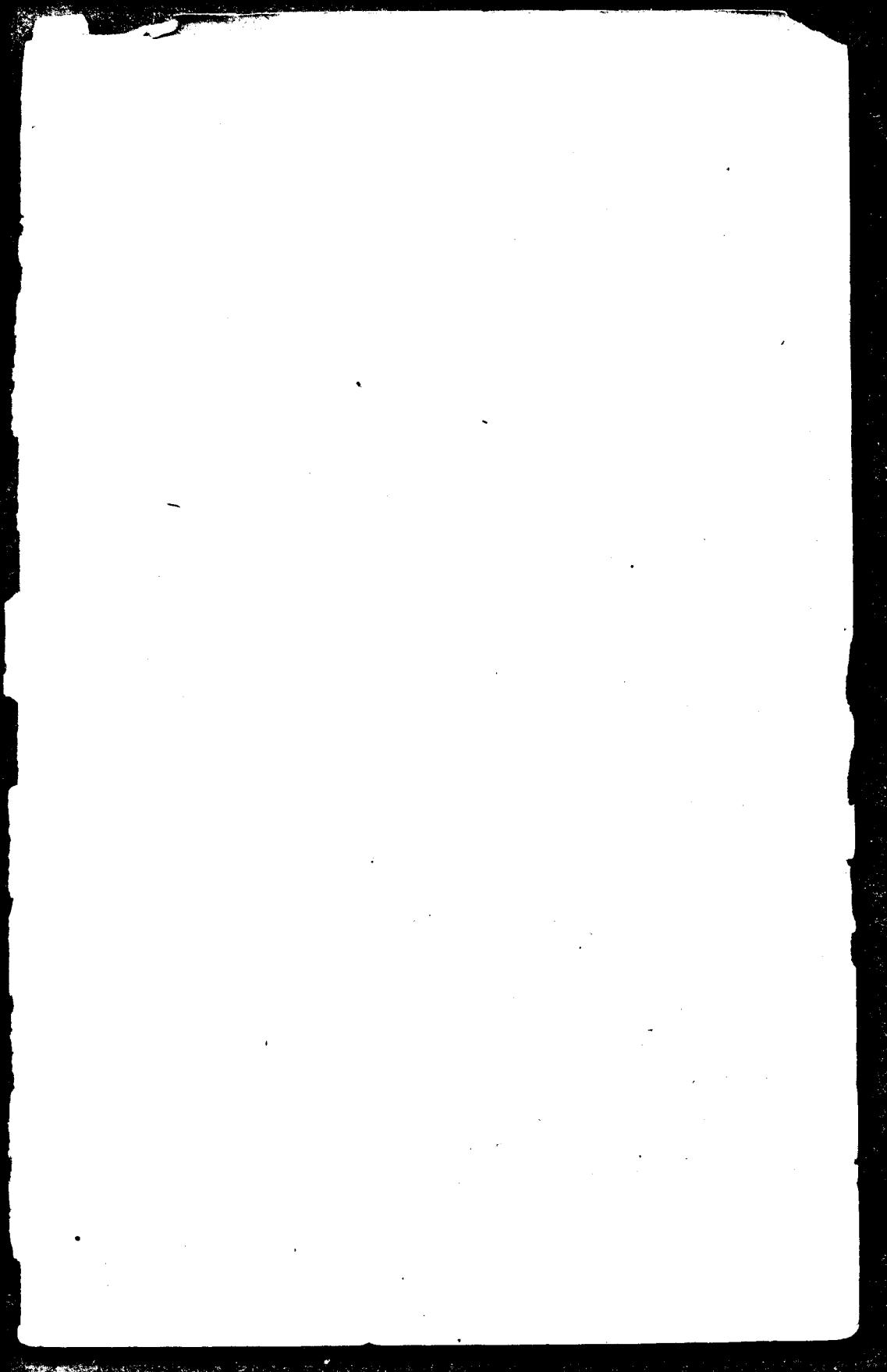
Statement of circumstances
attending the experiment of
colonizing free negroes at the
Island of A'Voche, Hayti, W.I.



Class L47d

Book 84





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STATEMENT
OF CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE EXPERIMENT
OF
COLONIZING FREE NEGROES,
AT THE ISLAND OF A'VACHE,
HAYTI, W. I.

Congress having made an appropriation of six hundred thousand dollars, for the purpose of promoting the colonization of certain free persons of color of African descent, the President of the United States on the thirty-first day of December, 1862, entered into a written contract with Bernard Kock, formerly a merchant of New Orleans, in presence of Senator Doolittle, whereby the said Kock was to receive from the U. S. Government fifty dollars per head for deporting to and colonizing in the Island of A'Vache, W. I., voluntary emigrants of the above mentioned class, to the extent of five thousand, said money to be paid on satisfactory evidence being received that said emigrants were "shipped on board for A'Vache, and duly provisioned."

In pursuance of this object, and towards the fulfilment of said contract, Mr. Kock presented himself in New York, and being introduced by respectable and well known gentlemen, ap-

plied to several influential persons there, known to be devoted friends to the Administration, to assist him with pecuniary aid towards carrying into effect the policy of the government under said contract. Mr. Kock brought with him a copy of the contract made with the President, (the original being lodged in the Department of State), and the original of a contract between the Haytian Government and himself, whereby the Island of A'Vache was leased to the said Kock for a period of twenty years, giving him the right to cultivate the said Island, and guaranteeing to his colony liberal aid and military protection.

It was proposed to fit out this expedition in a manner conformable with the expressed wishes of this Government, and on the most humane principles; to limit the first shipment to five hundred persons, (one-tenth of the number permitted by the contract), to furnish them with all the necessary comforts; to send out with them by subsequent opportunities abundant supplies of food, clothing, medicines, material for building, machinery and implements for the cultivation of the soil. Mr. Kock represented that he had twenty employees upon the Island engaged in its preparation for the reception of the emigrants; that temporary buildings had been erected there suitable for their protection and comfort, until permanent houses could be erected by the colonists themselves. With regard to the Island of A'Vache, *as a suitable place for such an experiment*, it was taken for granted by the gentlemen entertaining this proposition, that the President of the United States would not have given his official sanction to the enterprise without a strong belief in its adaptation to the purpose designed by the party with whom he had contracted; but in addition to this presumptive evidence, the public had been made acquainted with this colonization scheme, and its favorable reception by the President, in the official report of the Commissioner of Emigration at Washington, wherein the details of the plan were discussed and its adoption recommended. From this printed report we make the following extracts:

HAYTI.

The claims of Hayti for recognition have at last been honored. Commercial relations, however, have not been fully established. The government thereof commissioned Col. Ernest Roumain, a special commissioner of emigration, to visit this country, and recognize its office of emigration by appointing Mr. G. Lawrence their agent. His office is No. 55 Liberty street, New York.

There is a proposition in the interest of Hayti now before the President. At his request, I examined it, and prepared the drafts of contracts and agreements, which are now being considered.

It is proposed to select *one* of the islands of Hayti, and constitute it an industrial establishment, from which the main island can gradually draw enterprising, skilled, and moral citizens, acclimated and ready to take useful positions in the republic.

Bernard Kock, the gentleman who makes this proposition, is a practical business man.

In a letter to the President, he thus describes the island :

"The most beautiful, healthy, and fertile of all the islands, belonging to the Republic of Hayti, is the island of A'Vaché, which is about twelve miles from the city of Aux Cayes. It covers an area of about a hundred square miles, is known to be free from reptiles, and to have a healthy and agreeable temperature, the thermometer rising rarely above 80° in the shade, in consequence of its exposure to the trade-winds. The interior of the island is hilly, in some places rising as high as three hundred feet above the level of the sea. It is well timbered with mahogany, oak, hard, and dye woods, while in the neighborhood of the coast it is mostly prairie land, and ready for the plough. As would be expected in a country like this, the soil and climate are adapted for all tropical productions, particularly sugar, coffee, indigo, and more especially cotton, which is indigenous. Upon the north side of the island is the beautiful bay of Ferret, with an average depth of twenty-eight feet, upon whose bosom a large fleet could repose in safety, secure from the storms of the ocean ; and here it is proposed to erect a commercial city, with all the convenience necessary to such an enterprise.

"Before the revolution, which gave St. Domingo to the colored race, a portion of this island was cultivated by the Duke of Praslin, to whom it belonged by right of concession, but the French were driven from it, and for nearly a hundred years it has been a solitary waste, awaiting the hand of industry to awaken its echoes.

"Attracted by its beauty, the value of its timber, its extreme fertility, and its adaptation for the cultivation of cotton, I prevailed upon President Geffard to concede the island to me for twenty years, the documentary evidence of which has been lodged with the Secretary of the Interior."

By the terms of the deed of concession, Mr. Kock has the exclusive right to cut timber for commercial purposes by paying a part of the amount cut. The government gives him the free use of the soil cultivated for the subsistence of the colony, while it charges a small sum per acre for all that may be used for cultivating "colonial productions" for the market, such as cotton, coffee, &c. The rent for the cultivation of these articles is not

set forth in the contract, but by letter of the 8th instant, in answer to my objection on this point, he informs me that the rent has been agreed on. He says: "The rent which I shall have to pay for this selected land is, according to law, five (5) Haytian dollars for one carreau of three and one-third American acres, to be paid at the end of each year." This explanation makes his contract perfect. We have been informed that the Haytian government grants a premium on the production of cotton that will go far to discharge this rent.

* * * * *

"II.—Laws on the naturalization of emigrants of the African and Indian races.

"Fabre Geffrard, on the report of the Secretary of State of Justice, and by the advice of the council of the Secretaries of State, considering that prompt action is demanded in behalf of those who possess the required qualifications to become Haytians, in order to enable them with facility to enter into the immediate enjoyment of the right attached to naturalization, proposes the following law:

"ARTICLE 1. Article 14 of the civil code is modified as follows: All those, who by virtue of the constitution, are able to acquire the rights of Haytian citizens, must, during the first month of their arrival in this country, before the Justice of the Peace of their residence, and in presence of two well-known citizens, make a declaration to the effect that they come with the intention of settling in the Republic. They will, at the same time, before the Justice of the Peace, take oath that they renounce every other country save Hayti.

"ART. 2. Provided with the verbal process of the Justice of the Peace, setting forth the declaration that they come to settle in the Republic, and their taking of the oath, they will present themselves at the offices of the President of Hayti, to receive an act from the Chief of the State recognizing them citizens of the Republic.

"ART. 3. The present law annuls all laws or measures which are contrary to it, and shall be executed with despatch by the Secretary of State for Justice.

"Given at the National Palace, at Port au Prince, the 27th day of August, 1860, the Fifty-seventh Year of Independence.

"GEFFRARD."

[Then follow the signatures of various officials, as in the previous law. Both of these laws were unanimously passed through both branches of the Legislature.]

To secure success to the Colony and create a basis of prosperity for the time to come, it was proposed to make it commercially profitable in the manner set forth in the Report of the Commissioner of Emigration and not a continuous drain upon the means of the gentlemen who now stepped forward to assist the Government in its avowed policy. Cotton, it was known, grew, with some disadvantage, on the main land; but these drawbacks, it was stated, arose, not from the character of

the soil, but from the natural indolence of the native population. This evil, it was represented, would be avoided on the Island of A'Vache where the natural industry of the American negro would be called into activity by liberal wages and the hope of independent advantages not obtainable to a like extent even in this country. Mr. Kock also stated that he had grown cotton himself on the island, where, too, "it grew indigenously." The soil was represented to be similar to that of Alabama and admirably adapted to the growth of the staple."*

Under these circumstances, and in the belief that by advancing the pecuniary aid necessary to carry out the object proposed, the wish of the President would be complied with and the policy of the Government sustained without pecuniary loss to themselves and with a fair prospect of ultimate commercial advantages, certain gentlemen of New York entered into obligations to fit out and despatch a vessel with these emigrants to the Island and to follow it up with other ships and supplies in accordance with and in the spirit of the contract made with Mr. Kock. To this end obligations were entered into to the extent of Seventy thousand dollars; that sum being required, by careful estimate, to deport to and establish in the Island, the first company of five hundred emigrants. In part reimbursement of the expenses of actual shipment, the amount of money payable under the contract, viz., twenty-five thousand dollars, *was pledged to these parties by said Kock under the provisions of his contract which made it payable when the emigrants "were shipped on board for A'Vache duly provisioned."* Accordingly, the ship *Ocean Ranger*, a seaworthy vessel sailing under English colors as an additional protection to the emigrants,—(a necessity called for by the hazardous nature of the enterprise,) was chartered in New York and fitted out in a suitable manner for the transportation of the emigrants. Provisions, stores, clothing, and other necessities were purchased, and contracts for houses and machinery were made. Mr. Kock had previously engaged a suitable number of white superintendents, said to be humane, practical, and experienced men, and advances were made to them to secure their services. Mr.

* This statement subsequently proved to be false, Mr. Kock never having set foot on the Island or even seen it, until he landed there with the colony!

Watkins, a respectable and educated man of color, favorably known to many prominent Republicans here, and having previously conducted emigration movements, proceeded to Fortress Munroe and vicinity where he soon collected a company of the number required, eager to embark in the enterprise, and who immediately made preparations to sail, many of them abandoning their employments and wages due, so strongly did they desire a change of condition. The ship *Ocean Ranger* was lying in the harbor of New York laden and ready for sea, being on the eve of her departure for Fortress Monroe, there to receive the colored passengers in fulfilment of the contract, when it came to the knowledge of the parties interested, for the first time and to their no small astonishment and dismay, that the Government declined to recognize the contract with Mr. Kock!

Mr. P. S. Forbes, one of the gentlemen who had advanced largely towards the undertaking, being induced thereto wholly because it was understood to be a government measure, and guaranteed as such by the President's own signature to the contract with Mr. Kock, was informed, on application at the Department, that the policy of the Administration was unchanged, and that representations made against the character of Mr. Kock, and in part believed by the Government, had alone induced the withdrawal of the contract; and that the contract would still be made with others, if satisfactory parties offered themselves. No intimation was given, however, at that time, that the provisions of the contract would be changed. These gentlemen, let it be clearly understood, had not in the first instance sought for or desired any contract, but had simply come forward, *in good faith*, to assist in the carrying out of a contract already made with another party. In the extraordinary emergency now presented, they were forced to accept one of two contingencies—either to abandon the enterprise altogether, or to become parties to *any* new contract which the government might see fit to offer. To have abandoned the enterprise in its then advanced stage, would have been to sustain a very large loss in money; to have discharged a vessel then lying in the harbour of New York, loaded for sea,—to have compromised, or paid in full, a barren charter party,—to have compromised or paid in full bills for house materials, stores, provisions,

clothing, machinery, and agricultural implements, on board, or awaiting shipment by other vessels,—to have paid on Mr. Kock's account a year's salary to superintendants, mechanics, and servants, for services not to be rendered,—and to have disappointed, and perhaps thrown out of employment, several hundred people who, with their families and household effects, were waiting on the hot wharf of Hampton, and in the streets about Fortress Munroe, waiting the arrival of the vessel which they had been assured would be there by an appointed day. On the other hand, there was shown to be no reasonable ground to apprehend any failure to the enterprise. The President, in a personal interview with one of the proposed parties to the second contract, emphatically stated that the policy of the Government with regard to colonization would be carried out; "that he desired the experiment to be tried," and that Congress had placed in his hands six hundred thousand dollars, to be expended by him in this object, and "according to his own judgment."

The position that these gentlemen stood in, in relation to the proposed contract, was clearly stated to the Government at that time; and it was represented that the enterprise had much better be abandoned, unless proceeded with at once; inasmuch as the ship was then lying under heavy demurrage in the harbor of New York; that the people at Fortress Monroe were awaiting her arrival at considerable personal inconvenience, and that a few days' delay might jeopardise the enterprise, by causing the emigrants to arrive at the island too late for the planting season, and too late to comply with the terms of the Haytien contract. *On these grounds alone*, which were largely those of humanity, and certainly of necessity, haste was urged in the delivery of the new contract. As before stated, these gentlemen were in a position by no means desired by themselves, and in which they had been forced by the unexpected refusal of the Government to recognize the contract with Mr. Kock. Had the Government *then* stepped forward to their relief, and reimbursed them for the expenditures made by them on the faith of the President's signature, the enterprise would have been most readily relinquished. Their position was clearly set forth in a letter addressed by Mr. Forbes to the Secretary of State, of which the following is a copy :

Washington, 15th March, 1863.

Dear Sir,—From the nature of our conversation this morning, I judge that you are under a wrong impression as to my agency in the matter of contrabands for Hayti; and as I had no opportunity of explaining the matter verbally, I hope you will allow me to do so by letter.

I did not come, as you seem to infer, to ask a favor, nor any concession which was favorable to me, for I have never asked either from the Government, nor do I know that I shall ever be under the necessity of doing so; on the contrary, I had understood that a policy had been adopted which was to be carried out in reference to the employment of contrabands, and believing that I could contribute to carry out this policy, I had offered assistance to a person supposed by me to be authorized by the Government to do so. Before I discovered that his authority was questioned, I had gone so far as to charter a vessel, and load her with provisions and materials necessary to carry to Hayti 450 contrabands, and there employ them.

You are aware that to make their services available, they should be there by middle of April, otherwise a year would be lost; and, in fact, it would be better that they should remain here.

I am no applicant for a contract for 5,000 contrabands, and do not want it, but am willing to send forward the number the vessel now chartered can take, and there my agency must end.

If there is any party ready to do this, I shall be glad.

You will thus see that I am not expecting to obtain any concession involving large pecuniary advantages to myself. On the contrary, while I have ever been and am ready to contribute a part, or, if necessary, the whole of my fortune to support my country, in this hour of trial, I cannot consent to appear as a spectator in her necessities.

I am, with great respect,

Your obed't servant,

P. S. FORBES.

Hon. WM. H. SEWARD,
&c., &c., &c.

From the above, it will be perceived, by a liberally disposed Government, that these gentlemen accepted the new contract from sheer necessity, and not from choice, and that they stood plainly in the position of co-operators with the Government in its avowed policy, rather than as seekers of individual emolun-

ment, at the expense of that Government. In this spirit, the new contract was accepted by us, in behalf of those who had become pecuniarily liable on account of the contract previously made with Mr. Kock. The Government was at that time informed by us that the stipulated sum per head to be paid to the contractors for the deportation of the emigrants was insufficient to cover the expenses of their transportation, food, and clothing. This money from the Government, it was confidently expected, would be paid immediately upon the *shipment* of the emigrants. The President so understood it, and upon this understanding the parties to the second contract accepted it. Before, however, the contract was signed, the President expressed some fears lest the expedition should "be tampered with by evil-disposed persons *during the voyage*." As we had full confidence in the Captain, and the purposes of the men in charge of the emigrants, we voluntarily, and we think it will be acknowledged, liberally, proposed to wave the receipt of this money *until the American Consular certificate could be received from Hayti as proof that the emigrants were landed on the Island of a Vache*. To this proposition the President expressed his approval, and on the understanding, that on the production of this certificate, the money would be paid, the contract was accepted by us. When, however, the document was completed, it was found to contain the further proviso, that the written consent of the Haytien Government to the guarantees acquired in Mr. Seward's letter must be first provided:—to this we shall more particularly refer. It will suffice to say here, that the pressure of military business at the time, so occupied the President's attention, that we forbore to urge the reconsideration of this impracticable requirement. The ship was at once despatched to Fortress Munroe. Of the manner in which the vessel was fitted out and laden to receive these emigrants, we refer to the official report of the United States Marshal to the Secretary of the Interior. After thoroughly inspecting the vessel, then lying in the stream, that officer personally called upon us at our office to express his sense of the liberal manner in which we had prepared the vessel for the emigrants, and, in the course of his remarks, stated that the ideas of the requirements called for in such matters, in the mind of a Government

Official who had previously visited New York for emigration purposes, were "crude in the extreme, and fell far short of the necessities of the case."

Of the character and condition of the emigrants shipped at Fortress Monroe, it will suffice to say, that probably seldom has a happier company left our shores, not that they were deceived by the representations of Mr. Watkins, in whom they had great confidence, for they fully understood, and acknowledged that they understood, that the conditions of their well being would depend upon their ability and willingness to accomplish the results of industrial labor. According to their own representations, confirmed by the statement of officials at Fortress Monroe, it seemed indeed a blessing to remove them from that locality. That they were not improved by their proximity to to camp, was not less evident than that their general condition as industrious laborers had degenerated. Under the circumstances, emigration and colonization *at that time* seemed the happiest thing for the freedmen, pouring in as they did from the enemies lines, impoverished, and in many cases utterly unable to find employment. We, therefore, take occasion to say here, that notwithstanding the want of success which has attended this experiment, the President could hardly at that time have proposed a policy more intentionally humane and civilizing.

In shipping these families, great care was taken to avoid the introduction of unhealthy or infirm persons. It was particularly desirable to keep out those who had visited, or been in contact with the negroes at Craney Island, where the small pox prevailed. It is probable that notwithstanding these precautions, some infected person did get on board, as after a protracted voyage, that disease broke out some five days before reaching the island, and spread somewhat alarmingly before the emigrants landed. It eventually disappeared with prompt treatment on shore, and only about thirty persons succumbed to the disease. With this exception, the colony continued healthy during its stay on the Island A'Vache, until recently, when the unhealthy moisture of the "rainy season" produced several cases of fever among both whites and blacks.* Im-

* Our experience went to prove, however, that white Superintendents could not endure the climate; one of the latter died recently, and the others were in poor health.

mediately upon the landing of the emigrants, the Haytien Government promptly sent to the island a military protection, and in accordance with its laws and the wishes of the colonists, administered the act of naturalization, thereby giving to these people all the civil, religious, and political advantages and protection to which the natives are entitled, with the additional advantage that they are exempt from military service. By this act, they "renounced all allegiance to every other country save Hayti."

On the receipt here of the required U. S. Consular certificate, it was, on the *7th of July last*, sent in to the Secretary of the Interior, together with the certified list of emigrants and other documents necessary to substantiate the claim for the payment of the money due on the contract. These documents are in the hands of the Secretary of the Interior.

In the estimate of expenses necessary to initiate this enterprise, the sum of \$25,000 from the United States Government was set down to meet liabilities on this account due at the period assigned for its payment by the United States, allowing sufficient time to elapse for the conveyance of the emigrants and the receipt of the consular certificate. It was therefore *depended upon* at that time to enable the contractors to fulfil their pecuniary obligations. When the force of circumstances obliged us to accept this contract, it was not without the hope that the Haytien Government would make an exception in our favor for the sake of colonization (which it desired so much to encourage), and furnish the required guaranties. We were led to believe that they might do so from the result of our conversation with the Haytien minister, Col. Roumain. It was of course utterly impossible to ascertain the fact before shipping the emigrants—the enterprise being so far advanced under Mr. Koek's contract. In the obtaining of these guaranties we were disappointed. The Haytien Government replied that it had "no power" to furnish such "special guaranties." To furnish them would be, it was stated, not only contrary to their constitution, but would be granting that which the United States have never offered to foreigners, and would never offer to Haytiens in return. The act of naturalization was, in the opinion of that Government, "ample protection, and afforded to all emigrants of color every civil, political, and religious liberty

and protection allowed to their own people, and to have gone beyond this would most likely have given cause for jealous feelings between the native and the emigrant which might have led to fatal results, and certainly to the disadvantage of our colonists."

This explanation on the part of the Haytien Government is, we submit, so eminently just, that we entertain no fears with regard to its acceptance by the President, in lieu of the impracticable provision in the contract. This matter would doubtless have been adjusted at once had it come to the knowledge of the President, but, again, the great pressure of military business upon his attention induced us to submit to the inconvenience of our position rather than urge our claims for payment at that anxious period.

This being the case, it remained for us to do our best under the trying circumstances in which we were placed between the two governments. A second vessel was dispatched, laden with materials, provisions, and supplies. A special agent, Mr. A. A. Ripka, empowered to act for us in all particulars as if we were on the spot, was despatched to the Island.

Difficulties soon arose, however, in its management, utterly impossible to have foreseen. Mr. Kock, (whom it had been necessary to send out with the colony in order to take possession of the Island under his lease with the Haytien Government) proved obnoxious to the colonists, and was, at one time, driven away from the island by the black people themselves. As soon as practicable, his lease was transferred to the parties holding the contract here. Other superintendents were sent out to replace those who were unable to control the laborers. Every attempt was made by our special agent, Mr. Ripka, to establish the colony on a permanent and liberal footing. Corn, potatoes, &c., were planted; the land was opened; temporary houses erected, until proper machinery could be sent out from here; and an attempt to cultivate the cotton seed and coffee plant was made. The reports from the colony, however, continued to be conflicting. Our special agent returned to the United States to report his personal experience, the result of which was that neither the interests of emigration or of his principals here, or the welfare of the emigrants, would be promoted by further attempts at coloni-

zation at A Vache. The white employés seemed unable to enforce the judicious regulations which our agent had made for the good of the colony. Seeds of discord were sown by interested parties on the main land, desirous of breaking up the colony. The colored emigrants were violent at times upon the whites, using threats, and even attempting bodily outrage. The emigrants were also represented as being unwilling to work, although receiving liberal wages, regularly paid to them. They demanded luxuries to which they were unaccustomed in this country, and assumed an attitude of independence quite inconsistent with their position as "freedmen," and of men expected to support themselves by the labor of their hands. So far as their physical condition compared with their circumstances in this country, it was represented to be "infinitely more comfortable," but it was more the result of care on the part of those who had the responsibility of the enterprize, than of well earned prosperity on the part of the colonists. In fact, it soon became apparent that the knowledge of that responsibility was too well known to them, and a willingness to eat, drink and be merry at others' expense was soon generally manifested. The circumstances of their condition, and the unwillingness on the part of their employers to use coercion, which might have resulted in disaster, prevented a remedy to these evils. But even these might in time have been overcome had the soil of this island proved capable of cultivation, or promised return to labor. It soon appeared evident to the superintendents as well as to the more intelligent colored laborers themselves, that to attempt further cultivation would be fruitless, resulting in no good to the colonists or to the friends of colonization. The corn and vegetables planted for the subsistence of the colony were destroyed by vermin whenever put into the ground. Potatoes, which were planted in sufficient quantity to meet the wants of the people, had they produced, failed from a like cause, and the want of sustaining qualities in the soil. Subsistence was thus procurable only by purchase on the main land, and from stores shipped to the colony from this country. It is not surprising that in the face of these discouragements, even those industriously disposed in the colony should relax in their efforts, and finally desire, as many did, to remove

to the main island. To have allowed of such voluntary removal would have placed us in a new predicament. While the Island of A'Vache was the locality designated and intended for the colonial experiment, and while, on that island the laborers received direct protection and sustenance at our hands, yet no one could dispute their perfect right as freed agents to seek their fortunes elsewhere. This idea, reports our agent, was freely impressed upon their minds *by an official agent of the United States, who, in his desire to break up the colony, hesitated not to inform them that they would be justified in driving the white employees off the island and committing, if need be, worse atrocities.* In this complication of adverse circumstances our special agent, on his return to this country held an interview with Mr. Seward with a view to adopt such a course as in the opinion of this government was most conducive to the general good of all concerned. Mr. Seward candidly admitted that our position was an extremely perplexing one, and expressed a strong desire to aid in releasing us from it. He did not deny that we had faithfully performed our part of the contract save where we had failed to carry out certain provisions from circumstances beyond our control. His main desire was to adopt some practicable and humane measure whereby these emigrants could be transferred to the main land or elsewhere under circumstances that would secure their well being and protection. This course, he remarked, would justify such a modification of the contract as would authorize the government in paying us the amount due; and, with his usual frankness, he expressed the desire that we should receive our money. The result of these interviews was, that at his suggestion, a special agent on the part of this Government was sent to Hayti to inquire into the condition of the colony, and to adopt such measures of relief as were deemed most fitting under the peculiar circumstances of the case. It is unfortunate that this agent did not sail from New York at the time designated, as had he done so, an additional month's unprofitable support of the colony might have been avoided. Meanwhile, our own agent again visited the colony, and finding no improvement in the prospects of the soil or the habits of the colonists, and being advised thereto by every inducement of

humanity, endeavored to effect such a transfer of interest to responsible parties resident at Aux Cayes as would insure to the benefit of the colored people. A satisfactory arrangement was at last completed with parties of respectability and means and our agent proceeded to Port au Prince to obtain the sanction of the Haytien Government. To his no small regret and surprise, President Jeffrard, for "political reasons," * declined to recognize any transfer. Thus thwarted in his efforts to accomplish some compensating arrangement with regard to the colonists and effectually prevented from carrying out the humane wishes of our own government, he awaited the arrival of the United States' agent for advice. The President of Hayti, it was intimated, would receive and employ on his own plantation a considerable number of these people, but they would not consent to be thus employed, nor would our agent influence their wishes in this particular. The extraordinary dilemma in which our agent found himself may be briefly stated thus: The interests of the colonists demanded that they should be placed where remunerative labor would insure their prosperity. This was impossible on A'Vache, from natural causes. White residents at Aux Cayes, willing to employ them were not permitted to do so by the Haytien authorities. To labor under black employers, even on the President's plantation was repugnant to their feelings. To have permitted them to dispose of themselves on the main land, and follow their own fortunes, not only as freemen but as naturalized citizens of Hayti, would have involved a *moral* responsibility on our part impossible to assume. To have shipped them back to the United States he knew to be a step not considered desirable by our Government, save as a *demier* resort. This, however, seemed to Mr. Ripkar to be the only course left to him, and yet he held no power to obtain a safe convoy, and the very attempt to carry out this plan would probably have placed him in antagonistic position to the Haytien Government, these people being Haytien citizens, and having renounced allegiance to the United States!

While Mr. Rika was at Port au Prince resolving these difficulties, the U. S. agent, Mr. Donoghue, arrived there, and being authorized to provide for these people, and, if necessary, return

them to this country, which at that time seemed the only available relief, it was mutually agreed upon between the two gentlemen that Mr. Donnohue, as the accredited agent of the United States, was, from his position, better qualified to make an arrangement satisfactory to all parties, and especially to his own government, than any one else. They were accordingly transferred to his hands.

It is almost unnecessary to remark that notwithstanding the peculiar circumstances which had forced us into our present position with regard to this Colony, and notwithstanding that up to that time we had failed to receive one dollar of the money payable by the U. S. Government under the contract, (which fact, in our opinion, would have released us from further obligation,) such an abandonment on our part was never at any time contemplated—common humanity would have prevented such action. To have transferred them to the main land, however, and allowed them to seek employment for themselves, and in *this way* to have stopped the constant drafts upon us for their support, was a course at one time deemed practicable in the event of no other being presented. Our agent, Mr. Ripka, succeeded in procuring profitable employment at Aux Cayes for a portion of the mechanics belonging to the Colony, but in these cases we were still obliged to support their families on the island. Up to the period of the arrival of the United States agent at Port au Prince, and for several weeks after labor had ceased on the island, we continued to support the Colony in the same liberal manner as heretofore, and at the period of the transfer, there was sufficient food on the island to support the people for two weeks or more, after which further supplies were procurable at Aux Cayes. It may be remarked here that the women and children had, from the first, proved a dead weight to the enterprise. The women positively refused to do any field work, and the only work done by them (washing and sewing) was liberally paid for beside our gratuitous supplies of food.

These women and children were taken out by us in compliance with the expressed wishes of the United States Government, in order that *families* might constitute the main element of emigration, and the able-bodied women were certainly expected, under the inducement of liberal wages, to ~~by~~ something

towards the practical success of the colony. They, however, showed no disposition to exertion of any kind, and we are forced to conclude that had we been less lenient and liberal in our policy towards them, greater industrial efforts would have been manifested. As "freemen," however, and fully sensible of their rights, *coercion*, in any shape, would have been unauthorized and improper. One of the principal obstacles in the way of our success may be here alluded to. From the first announcement of the President's policy with regard to the colonization of the "contrabands," as these people were then popularly termed, this policy was opposed by two classes of the public, viz.: those who were ready to oppose *any* act of the Administration, however judicious, and those who honestly held the opinion that no element of labor should be allowed to leave this country. It is not surprising, therefore, that from the initiation of this movement, false reports should be circulated as to its character and the character of the man who obtained the contract in the first instance—Bernard Kock. Of him we desire to say as little as possible—he being the original cause of the deception practiced upon the President, and in this way upon us. No sooner, however, had he landed the emigrants, several of whom were, as has been mentioned, afflicted with small-pox, than the most disastrous accounts were busily circulated and sent home of their condition. One of these will suffice to indicate the character of the others, viz.: "that half the colony had perished from disease and bad treatment, and the remainder had fled for safety or been sold into slavery!" Mr. Kock's brief management of the colony was beyond question singularly at variance with his character as a "practical business man," and his system of punishing the refractory was absurd and ineffectual; but, on the other hand, justice compels us to say that we believe he had at heart the good of the colony, and we know that in cases of malignant sickness his fearless personal attention to the wants of the invalid was in the highest degree commendable. Subsequently, when the colony was under the immediate charge of Mr. Ripka, this gentleman, with the other superintendents, administered to, and watched by, these poor sufferers, personally attending to their wants.

These instances of devotion under very aggravating circumstances, demand our recognition, and go far to disprove the charges of "inhumanity," so causelessly made by interested parties. Mr. Ripka superseded Mr. Kock at the earliest practicable moment, and the lease of the island was transferred to us. Of Mr. Ripka's admirable management, of his devoted care of the people committed to his charge, and of his indefatigable efforts to place the colony on a permanent basis, ample evidence can be obtained by this Government of the officials at Aux Cayes, of the leading merchants (who were conversant of all movements on the island), and of the colored people themselves. That the colonists, both the whites and blacks, suffered for the want of suitable and permanent buildings is undoubtedly true. but this is one of the hardships which attend the efforts to settle all new places. In the estimates made for the provision of the colony, between \$10,000 and \$12,000 were appropriated for building material, and about \$5,000 of lumber for the *main* edifices was shipped. The houses for the colored people it was proposed to build from the abundant supply of timber on the island, and the machinery for sawing this timber was contracted for in this city. A steam-engine of sufficient capacity for running the saw and grist mills was made to our order, and was on the point of being shipped when we were informed by two of the superintendants who returned from the island that it was needless to send out this machinery, as the attempt to cultivate the island would be fruitless, and colonization there would prove a failure. We awaited, then, the more reliable accounts of our special agent, Mr. Ripka, and these proving confirmatory, this shipment of useless machinery was not made. Had the emigration taken place at the period at which it was contemplated under Mr. Kock's contract, and no delay occurred subsequently, the colony would have been on the island in ample time to have erected more suitable habitations before the commencement of the "rainy season."

Having thus related the circumstances of this attempt at colonization in Hayti, we place this record in the hands of the President in the confident belief that he will recognize our faithful efforts to carry out an experiment, initiated by himself in an hour of great public need, and which has failed of suc-

cess from a combination of circumstances utterly impossible on our part to have foreseen or averted. We believe that the President, under these circumstances, will, in a spirit of equity and justice, not allow us to be pecuniary sufferers in our attempt to carry out a public policy—forced as we were into it by the faith which, as loyal citizens, we had in his official signature, to a contract which we at that time believed to be a vital instrument.

We challenge the most rigorous investigation into our conduct in this unfortunate experiment, and we believe that the more closely the matter is investigated, the more just will appear our claim for relief. We have expended in this attempt to promote this enterprise *between eighty and ninety thousand dollars*, not one dollar of which will ever be returned to us, excepting at the hands of the Government. Is it too much to expect that out of the large amount held by the President for emigration and colonization purposes, and subject to his own judgment in its manner of disbursement, we shall receive the amount of our expenditures in sustaining his policy, when the result of that expenditure has proved so disastrous to us? Let this matter be clearly stated. It must not be argued that we, as applicants for a contract, on which we expected to make profit, ask to have our losses made up. We, it must be borne in mind, never sought for or desired any contract, until the extraordinary circumstances named obliged us to accept it, or adopt an alternative which would have caused great distress and certain pecuniary loss.

On the broad ground of a liberal interpretation by the Government of the acts of its loyal citizens, and in the spirit which governs the transactions between man and man, we believe that the President, when he shall have examined into the merits of this case, will not hesitate to come to our relief.

As a measure of economy, we think he will admit that the reimbursement to us of the amount of these expenditures, may well be made, since the Government, by the testing of this experiment, is saved the vast outlay attending further experiments, while it may well be paid, on the ground alone, of simple justice to loyal citizens, who have labored assiduously and conscientiously to carry out a public policy, in doing which they

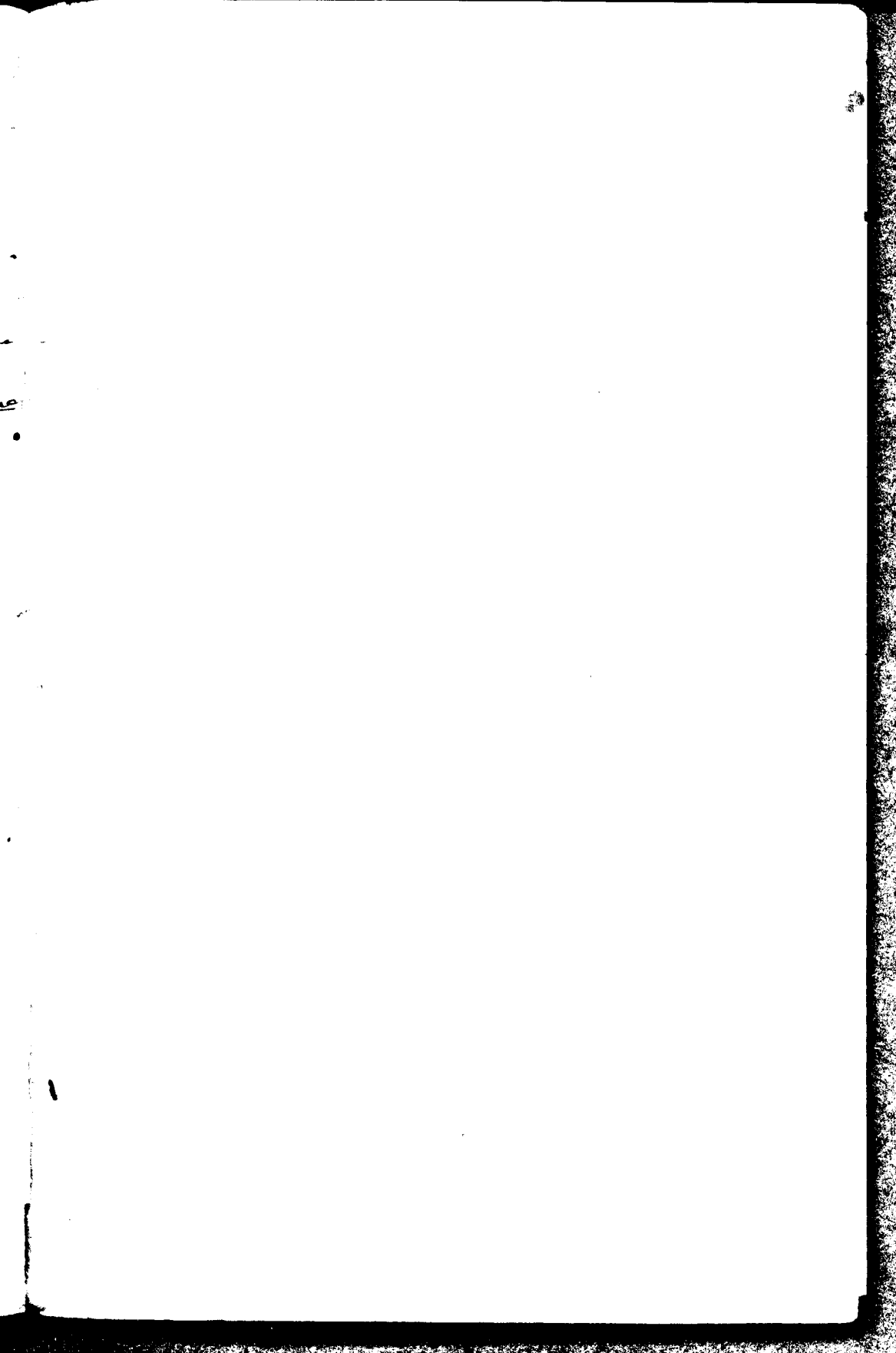
have fruitlessly expended a large sum of money, besides suffering a degree of mental solicitude and anxiety, which no amount of money can repay.

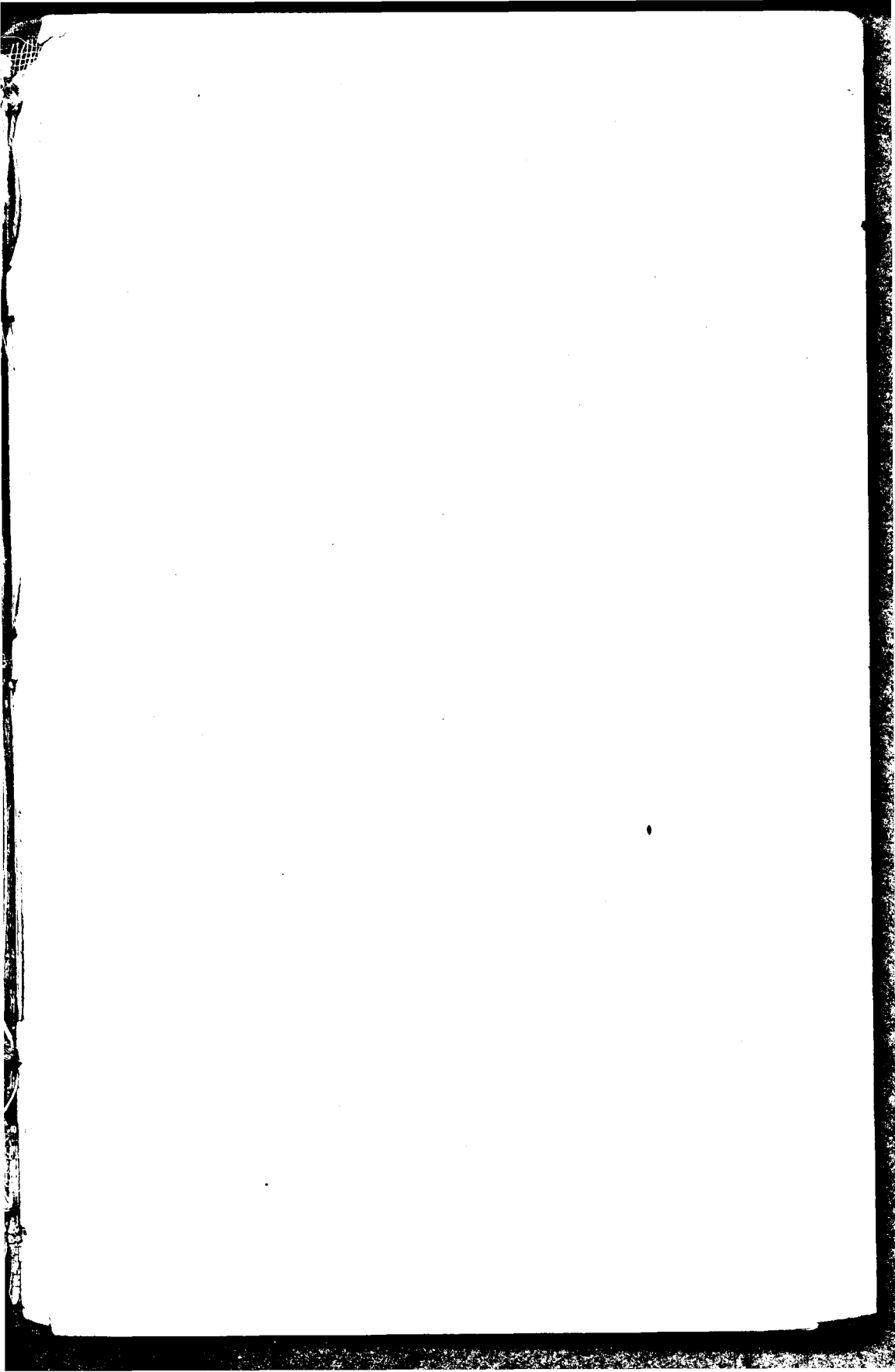
Respectfully submitted by

New York, January 12th, 1864.

J. S. Horbes
for C. K. Tuckerman
C. K. Tuckerman

To The President.





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